Ross Dowson archives – correspondence – Year 1968

01_09	Letter to Ted, Sudbury (ON), re: introducing Chris T. of Halifax; his information on the bribery attempt of another candidate in Colchester-Hants campaign
01_18	Letter to Dear Lois (Bedard, sister), England, re: family news; movement news; planned Canadian teachers` tour to Cuba
03_16	+Letter to Ruth (Bullock), Vancouver: The tax problem of selling antiwar art in the bookstore; ignoring Stalinist line that the Vietnam war is over and we should cool it
04_18	+Letter to Ruth, Vancouver: rushing the Women's brief to press, missed the lack of clear reference to abortion rights, will correct
05_08	Letter to R.D. from Milton Acorn, P.E.I., re: changes to his article
06_23	Letter to Dear Lois (sister, abroad) re: news of movement in Canada & France; meeting SWPers in New York; preparations for a large convention in Montreal; choice for campsites in Ontario
06_28	+Minutes of the Central Committee Plenum: Convention agenda
07_01	+Minutes of CC Plenum: (Convention) election of officers & PC, CC-PC communications; finances, native minorities, Quebec
08_15	Letter to the Trailblazers; Comrades, re: construction underway at Deseronto campsite, French comrade speaking on defence of JCR; details on sending literature; news of the tour
08_24	Letter to William Rodney, Professor of History, Royal Roads, Victoria BC, re: Vanguard review of new book, RD`s acquaintance with Spector and MacDonald and offer to open movement archives
08_24B	Letter to U of T Press, re: enquiry about other publications
08_24C	+Circular letter to Dear Friend: Salmon River encampment underway, under construction; map attached
08_99	Undated, from speech notes found in August1969: **Speech on ``Soldiers of the International``** a review including roles of Maurice Spector and Jack MacDonald

09_10 **Document: ``Confidential** – for information only`` Comrades: report on P.C. meeting re: resignation of Allan E. and Jean R. and answering their charges in view of their being recently moved to central leadership

09_25 To all branches & Members at Large, from RD for the PC: statement on the defection of Rands and Engler from the movement

11_04 Letter to Art (Grey), Costa Rica, re: growth in the Quebec student milieu; October antiwar mobilizations across Canada; two national student tours; repercussions of the Czech invasion

11_16 Letter to P. Violino, Windsor ON: closest socialists are SWP Detroit

11_18 Letter to John (--?), Niagara Falls ON re: developments in Hamilton

11_20 **Document:** ``On the Tendency Formation Statement`` by RD for the PC: report of Vancouver branch group wanting to re-open recent convention decisions and positions for more discussion

12_03 Letter to Dave, St. Catherines (ON): RD`s scathing critique of *Local 199 News*

12_19 Letter to Keith MacDonald, Halifax, re: interest in socialism, referred to local activist Chris T.

12_19B Letter to Dave Bain, Willowdale (ON): heard SWP US presidential candidates; activities of local socialists

12_30 +Circular letter to Dear Friend, re: Camp Poundmaker; lots for sale, camp community and committee being set up for common use areas including a lodge

12_99 Undated Letter to Jack Alan Robbins, Fordham U. (USA) re: remarks on new Rodney book on Canadian radical history

Jan 9, 1968

Sudbury
Dear Ted;

Dont beef, it's just as cold down here as it is up there--below zero several days now.

Before you come down next how would you like to do a little job

Our friend Chris Thurrott was in from Halifax last weekend for the student assembly and he dropped into the store with aclipping on the Colchester Hants by-election. This is the itemxxxxxxx which was carried here in which both Elwood Smith of Sudbuby and the other guy said there had been bribe offers if they would withdraw. But the item as it appeared in the Truro paper had more and here it is;

"Mr Smith said he sent another letter to Mr Hamel Wednseday requesting disq lification of the by-election because decisions not to fiadd Liberal or NDP candidates were made by the national headquarters of both parties and not by the riding associations.'I therefore request that your office consider disq ualifying this election date and set up a new date so that the constituency political associations may hold nomination meetings without interference from their federal office."The letter also requests "an enquiry be called to investigate the influence used by the federal Liberal and New Democratic Party in keeping opposition candidates out of the Nov 6 Colchester Hants by-election.'"

Hamel is the returning officer---ail very interesting eh. Looks like Smith had a change of heart. Possibly there were a lot of beefs from the local people against the Douglas gang--perhaps he saw clearly that there was not goi g to be any campaign behind him and he wanted to withdraw-- who knows.

Here is what I propose. Go to see Elwood Smith. Tell him that you were down in T Toronto and when attending the student mobilization you met the federal executive member of the NDY from Halifax--Chris Thurrott. Thurrott told you about the clipping is very curious to know what it is all about--that he is a leading activist in the Halifax area and has been getting hell because he thought the party should contest the election and was so desparately concenred that he along with the federal president endorsed Dowson for whioh he has been getting shit.

Can Smith give you a copy of his letter? Get into a discussion with him and try and remember everything he says-as you want to send the dope to Thurrott he will understand your ta ing notes. As soon as you leave him remember everyhitng and jot it down. Dont leave it until you see me. xxfixxx Send down what notes you and info you get as soon as possible- We intend to say something in the coming issue.

comradely

Ross

Jan 18, 1968
Toronto

England

Dear Lois; (Bedford)

Are you sure that the tie is made from antelope skin. Even then it is almost enough to make me send a cheque in response to the Humane Society's latest appeal--it is so soft,so tender that it rouses pity for the former wearer--you positively feel that you have ~~xxxxx~~ stolen ~~xxxxxxx~~ it...you ponder over its fate. But even worse you think that you are feeling a baby's bum--and images of Elsa Kurse or whatever her name--the mad woman of Buchenwald-and her lamp shades of human skin. I don't know where I can wear it.

Ruth seems to be surviving out there is Applewood. I try to remember to phone her ocassionally. I have just talked to her at work. A tremendous storm here over the weekend. The schools closed down everywhere for one day and some for two. She could have easily taken over Jerry's apartment which is serviced by subway or stayed in a hotel but she is bent on heading out there every night. She couldn't get the garage doors up and had to get a lift from someone across the highway but since then she has patiently run the car back and forth to make a path and is now mobile.It appears that there are no kids around there to shovel the snow. She has Ettie coming in for a week in a few days, which is a good idea all around. But she isn't apparently looking for company --she practically kicked Murray out over the Christmas holiday.

The Dowson-Legace kids came down last Satuday but I was tied up in a meeting with Pat Mitchell and others who came in from Montreal. Claire is hard at owrk on preparations for a brief that we are going to present in the name of the League to a Royal Commission on Women that will be holding public sessions in June. The brief has to be in this next month. I am thinking of looking through your files to see if you have pulled anything togthar. I have an impression that you have done some work in this area.

We have Tom Faulkner head of the U of T student body at our coming forum. He just got re-elected after a crisis over his defence of the protest actions against Dow Chemical recruiting on the campus(Dow-napalm) The university students assembly on Vietnam came off very well over the Chrsitmas holiday and we now have contact in twenty campuses. A prof from U of NB who we met after he had taken a couple of busloads to the Washington demo when we were in Colchester-Hants came up. Latest is the firing of Prof Haggar(NDPer head of Arab group protesting Canada's support of the Zionists) from Waterloo. It seems the spark is his publication of an article scoring the school system and particulary the operation at Waterloo. Today tere is supposed to be a one day student strike there.

Did you get the last Young Socialist with the Student power material. Campus Vietnam complicity is of course tying the anti-Vietnam war movement right up with the Student power movement which was thought by some to be an alternative to getting involved in Vietnam.

If things go as they should and we hope, you might get back in time for a teachers tour of Cuba. As soon as I get this off I must write up a memorandum for the Cubans outlining such a project. They should jump at the proposal that they make arrangments to look after about 50 Canadian teachers touring them through the island concentrating on the area of edcuation for some kind of flat rate. Eve yone is going to the Carribran--why not Cuba. Besides they are doing some good work in the field of education. Interest should be considerably heightened following the conference of intellectuals....a big success I take it from Granma--although I am still waiting for a report in the Militant from Harry Ring who is down there right now.

Hope you are still managing to get into London and to see Ernie and company. The most complex problems but the biggest opportunities in the world. It would be good to keep in touch while you are there so you can say--oh yes I was there--when I was there, oh yes it reminds me--as I told so and so when I was there

fraternally, comradely, affectionately

Ross

March 16, 1968

Vancouver

Dear Ruth;

We received your very welcome gift of the firstborn of the Artists Against the Vietnam War Committee. It came in just in time for the Fair Play banquet. Hilton grabbed his copy with great satisfaction. The other copy I immediately turned over to the decorating committe of the banquet and haven't seen it since. No doubt it is hanging on the FPCC office walls. I will have to get someone to bring it back up here for our headquarters.

I have just been talking over the matter with Joan of our getting some for the store. We have two problems--one that we would have to collect tax on them if we sold them in the store--or be breaking the law. We do not have a tax licence as we cleaned everything taxable out of the store a while back. We dont want to break the law on such a little matter. Then too there is the problem of space. I agree with Joan that if we brought that in for sale we would want to bring others that are marketable such as Che etc. We dont have the slightest bit of space for display

What I propose is that the Artist's committee send an order form to the Spring Mobilization committee--I am enclosing a copy of the first run leaflet with the address. We are setting that address up as a permanent anti-war headquarters. They could display the poster along with others suchas that excellent one that the Cuban did of Viet squeezing uncle sams hat a on the anvil of Nam. It would do much to make the Hdqtrs a center and besides make a little money.

The Mobolization appears to be meeting everyone of our expectationss. As you know we have been trying to break into the NDP and the unions. Last Thursday we got Stephen Lewis NDP MLA to endorse the action along with Herridge and on Friday we got a leading steelworker and NDP MLA Gisborne and now someone tells me that we got Dr Shulman. And ludicrous as it may seem the CP is on the outside of it all.

I hope the Pacific Tribune published the reports on the new Endicott line. For them the war is over and the anti-war elements should shut up so that the US can get out without losing too much face. Tolentino tells me that in Winipeg this weekend the CP liners were expressing the view that thewar is over and won---of course they forget Laos, etc etc.

How is Reg these days--working hard? I am wondering if he would consider doing some writing on the theme of RED POWER. Havent hear much about what is happening among the BC Indians but red power is being talked up in Kenora Ontario. And Reg is the expert. Would he talk to the Vanguard BC editor Al Engler as to how he feels about taking this up.

comradely

Ross

April 18, 1968

Vancouver;

Dear Ruth;

I hasten to reply to your note of the 16th on the brief.

We have run it off already---L mailed 1,000 copies as it came off the press late last night. Just got it off in the 11;30 mail.

We were hoping that comrades would send in their ideas earlier--but as you know the public sessions are already underway in Victoria and we were worried that we might even miss the Vancouver sessions. We of course must circulate the brief on as big a scale as possible at the Vancouver sessions --then the Edmonton sessions and if possible the Saskatoon sessions.

I was suprised-- everyone was suprised in looking up the brief to find that you were absolutely right on the vague way that abortions finally turned up in the brief. On page 5 of the printed version it appears as "Any and all restrictions on the right of women to determine whether or not to bear a child should be removed." It is there of course but not explicit. The comrades felt that since the brief was already in the hands of the commission that we should not change it unless there was a clear mistake. So we agreed to put a summary box on the back page--summary of the four points. You will see that there we say "The removal of all restrictions on abortion."

I also took up a correction that Joyce mentioned. On page 5 of the printed version second line it reads "A far reaching system of government financed facilities including nursery schools and day care centers must be established." On the box on the back page this reads."Free educational facilities for children from birth to maturity." The original left it open. The comrades felt that it was sufficient to clear it up by the sentence in the box.

Havent had a chance to check the other points raised now in your letter received 12 hours after we mailed the copies of the brief. Will do so next opportunity.

Glad to see that you think that the brief generally stands up so we need have no hesitation about circulating it as wide as possible and the comrades will pitch it with it at every session that we can possibly attend.

Of course it appears in its open form as it will be going out with the next issue of the paper., as an insert. Comrades around the headquarters should be able to take a little time out to fold the copies I have sent, staple and trim them. We are hoping that people will buy them --say at a dime a peice. However should they prove reluctant to do so and we would end up with a poor circulation if we insisted on selling-why then in our opinion we should give them out free. We are hoping that our brief will be the center of attention at every point that we can sell or distribute.

Will turn your note over to Ruth and she will take up any other matters.

comradely

Ross

Trying to push the War Crimes Tribunal pamphlet thru the press so you get that on the 27th we will see if we can make it — a tall order

43 Elm Avenue
Charlottetown P.E.I.
May 8th, 1968

To : Ross Dowson

1 Cumberland Stx
Toronto

Dear Ross : ---

In my letter to the Vanguard, of this date : ---

In the last paragraph, third line from the bottom, where I say "that risk", substitute, "such risks" ...

Also add this very necessary footnote :

PS --- My remarks against Zionism should not be construed as Anti-Semitism. All movements to oppose Zionism should totally bar and damn Anti-Semitism. Refering to the Israelis or the Zionists as 'The Jews' is Anti-Semitic and should never be allowed to pass without objection : ---

(end of PS)

Such disclaimers, in my opinion, cannot be repeated too often. It also is not bad to say that Zionism <u>is</u> Anti-Semitism, since the Arabs are Semites ---

Another good thing is to point to the discrimination against Sephardic Jews in Israel;

but we shouldn't be 'Anti-Israel' here either. The Israeli baby born yesterday had nothing to do with the theft of the Arab lands ... Milton Acorn

43 Elm Avenue
Charlottetown P.E.I.
May 8th, 1968

[redacted]

Dear Ross;

Letter for the Vanguard enclosed. Further article on subject of State Capitalism will appear in C-2 or somewhere. Please do not draw any conclusions from the letter except the ones stated; especially not by the remarkable distortion of my views indulged in by John Ridel at a recent Toronto Forum.

Lenin and Martov were friends for life, addressed each other as 'tu' on occassion and played chess together. Let's consider we're Lenin and Martov --- as to who is 'Lenin' and who is 'Martov' let's retain our private views and hope neither of us are ...

I score one for you. The radical sentiment <u>is</u> coalescing around the NDP here. Through them I have a Free Press just about to start. However don't get inflated; I also score one for the CP --- 'revisionist and all that' --- the Communist-Catholic dialogue has been of great help to me.

Love Milton A.
Milton

P.S. ... MacLuhan was right! The World Village is here! Charlottetown is just as sophisticated (or as little) as Toronto or Vancouver ...

Bdg-E2 1968

June 23, 1968

(Bedard)

Dear Lois;

I met Art in New York and among other things he told me all about the professional tour you took him on which for the first time showed him the city of London's attractions. And of course we have been receiving the various items that you have been sending this way--the latest being the colored slides from the USSR, the airmail collectors stamp item on May Day and now the collectors item from England. Havent had a chance of course to see the slides--I gather they are of Stalingrad. Gave the May Day letter to Jeff White who collects stamps and was very enthusiastic about it---and as you know I collect many things but not stamps.

I am tied up in knots these days--we are right in the midst of our convention discussion. The convention is being held in Montreal over the july 1s t weekend. We are holding it there to give our Quebec comrades as big as possible lift---we w ll be holding a public rally on the eve of Dominion Day so we will make it a real identification with the Quebecois. This of course entails a lot of extra work for even though we have grown considerably in Montreal in the ast last year not enough to carry the burden without extra help. On top of that we are having quite an intensive discussion. We are now into our 8th bulletin. The badership has presented four major documents, that's more than we ever presented before and of course there are some counter contributions, ammendments and others. The Quebec document is I would think the most important-- our first rounded public statement and the c lmination of about 5 to 6 years discussions of an off and on character. Strange to say it is being accepted with almost no real debate.. I re-read it this morning and There are a few changes to be made but it is generally good. I have sent copies of all the bulletins to Toynbee and I think it would be worth your while to ask Ernie to loan it to you so that you can tallanyone who asks over there what it is all about over here in Quebec. Incidently the Quebec students in Paris who de Galle has been wining and dining over the past while particularly since his Vive Le Quebec Libre are reported in the Star last night as strongly protesting de Gaulle's outlawing of the left--particularly the students. A very firm statement of identification with the students and their struggle.

Hope you have had an opportunity to meet Joe H and Mary-Alice and have the lowdown on developments in France. The press here has very frankly presented the role of the CP---Last nights Star had an interesting article by its Paris correspondent on the elections--- he said that they were irrelevant since the big new force that has entered onto the arean of French political life was in no way represented in the election--that the CP was spending a great deal of time and energy dissociating itself from these very forces. This all should be having some impact of the British CP where I know we have had some contact at least on the youth plane. We should be soon getting information on the effect on the Fre ch CP's forces . Our youth must be exapnding rapidly. Outlawery is not new to them. When I was there is 1963 we were then semi-illegal

Not only are we on the eve of this election of li tle consequence in France I would imagine that deGaulle has scared a slighlty firmer alignment behind his party but we are on the eve of the Canada election.

As you would gather from the Vanguard this election is the best campaign that the NDP has carried. Everything was oriented to the working class vote. And within the framework of reformism and welfare statism the NDP campaign has been effective I would think. Trudea and the Liberals directed everything as did Stanfield to attempting to realign the ol party vote. I doubt that they ywill

out into the NDP vote in anyway., and in fact since their campaign has been so vacuous I think that contrary to all the baloney about the impact of Trudeau's appearnaces that the NDP will make headway. I wouldn't be suprised to see the NDP go up to 20% of the poll--and of course as you know in a great many seats a modest shift can mean ~~xxx~~ quite a few more seats for the NDP. At ayrate the NDP has appeared as the party of social change--very weak programmactically so that the pie in the sky charge will have some impact but it ta;ked on what anyone at all in contact with life knows are the issues. They will no doubt take a seat and maybe two in Montreal which will be very important for the next period. A few days ago the ~~xxxxxxxx~~CNTU council in Montreal came out for the NDP As Ruth probably told you I did not use your money for the property. And in fact we now have two peuces of property without any cost except minimal. No sooner had we made an irrevocable offer for the Pigeon Lake 3½ acres when Jimmy Howell offered us a few acres on a farm he has bought on the banks of the Salmon River just up from Deserento off 401. He insisted it go in my name so I now have about 12 acres of very beautiful campsite. George Bryant is all for developing this site and Hugh wants the other . We havent got the deed for either yet so we havent started to do anything strucrally. The Howell acerage isrougher. The river here is in a nice gorge with beautiful rock outcroppings, it is failry swift, about 4 0 feet wide and about 4 to 5 feet deep in places. There is a nice spring on it . My feeling is that it is a b t too rough and a bit too isolated for many of our gang--we will be making a deicsion on which to work up withing a few days. There will be lots to do on wither place. Pigeon Lake would be fine for your boat--we have acess to the lake and a dock about 300 yards from the lot--alas the Salmon River is navigable but only for a canoe. George did it the other day when he went down to see it. warmest regards Ross

Minutes of Central Committee Plenum, June 28, 1968 convened: 4:00 p.m.

Chairman: Connolly Secretary: Bannon Present: Adair. Bannon, Bourhis, Brock, Connolly, Crandall, Frazer, Kent, Miller, Paquette, N. Williams.
Absent: Briar, Lloyd, Mack, Scott, B.S.
Observer: George Novack.

Discussion and adoption of agenda.

Convention Public Rally: Report by Paquette. Motion: to adopt the proposition of the outgoing PC - carried.
Organizational Resolution: Discussion. Motion: that Kent and Courtney work out a proposed addition to the draft along the lines of discussion - carried.
Constitution: Discussion re proposed amendment to Section 6 of Article V as per Lloyd-Courtney submission. Motion: to leave in abeyance - carried.
Agenda: Motion: that day sessions of June 29-30 run from 10:00 to 12:30 and from 2 to 6, and that day session of July 1 run from 10 to 12:30 and from 2 to 4; evening session of June 29 to run from 7:30 to 10 - carried. Agreed to recommend to praesidium that three hours be alloted for presentation of line documents and two and a half hours each be allocated for panels (½ hour report, 2 hours discussion). Motion: to separate panels into two sets, the first consisting of Trade Union and Anti-war, and the second of NDP, Press and Women - carried. Motion: that order of presentation of line documents be 1. Political Resolution, 2. Quebec, 3. Canada-U.S. relations, and 4. Organizational Resolution - carried. Motion to recommend following total agenda: Saturday, June 29 - Political Resolution - 10:30 to 12:30 and 2 to 3: Canada-U.S. relations - 3 to 6; Trade Union and Anti-war panels 7:30 to 10; Sunday, June 30 - Quebec document - 10 to 12:30 and 2 to 4; panels on NDP, Women and Press 4 to 6: Monday July 1 - Organizational Resolution - 10 to 12:30; Election of incoming Central Committee 2 to 4 - carried. Motion: that there be no reports to the plenary sessions from the panels - carried. Motion: that praesidium consist of five members - carried. Motion: to select nominations on the basis of a slate of five - carried. Motion: to recommend praesidium consist of Courtney, Crandall, Flemming, Paquette and Adair - carried. Motion: to inform praesidium that the line documents (i.e. documents presented for a vote) are the Political Resolution, Organizational Resolution, Canada-U.S. relations, Nationalism and anti-Imperialism, and the Quebec document. - carried. Motion: to recommend that the nominating commission consist of 3 members from Toronto, 3 from Vancouver, 2 from Montreal, and one each from Ottawa and Edmonton - carried. Discussion on composition of incoming Central Committee. Motion: we recommend broadening the CC in terms of adding leading branch activists not now included and encompass representation from new branches, and to recommend an approximate total of 20 members. - carried. Motion: to advise the convention that the nominating commission should create the position of advisory membership - defeated. Motion: that in view of the criteria usually employed in selecting alternate CC members, we recommend that the number be restricted to no more than six - carried. Question of control commission referred to nominating commission. Motion: to recommend that messages of solidarity be sent from the convention to the French comrades and Hugo Blanco - carried. Motion: to recommend a credentials committee of three - carried. Motion: that committee consist of Y., N. Williams and Bannon - carried. Paquette raised question of addition to Organizational Resolution concerning LSA/LSO organizational relations. Motion: to propose an addition along the lines of discussion - carried.

meeting adjourned: 6:35 p.m.

-30-

Minutes of Central Committee Plenum, July 1, 1968. convened: 4:20 p.m.

Chairman: Adair Secretary: Bannon Present: Paquette, WB, Scott, Bourhis, AD, CO, Kent, Crandall, Bannon, Miller, Brock, Pedersen, Maxwell, Saunders, Frazer, Ruby, RM, WS, Courtney, Connolly, N. Williams, BG, Adair.
Absent: BE, Briar, Lloyd, Mack, Strong.

Agenda adopted. (Note: all motions unanimous unless otherwise indicated.)

Elections of Officers: m/c Kent be executive secretary.- m/c Paquette be editor of La Lutte Ouvriere. m/c Brock be editor of the Vanguard. m/c to transfer the position of section chairman from the west coast to Quebec in order to emphasize our recognition of the binational character of the movement. m/c chairman be Paquette. m/c Miller be organizational secretary.

Election of Political Committee: m/c that the Political Committee be composed of all full members of the Central Committee resident in the center and adjacent area and that the policy of regular joint meetings of the PC with Montreal members of the CC be continued.

m/c to grant leave to comrades required to leave meeting to meet travel schedules.

French Solidarity Campaign: Discussion. Agreement to proceed along lines of discussion, in particular that high priority should be assigned to raising of funds.
Plenum: m/c that we tentatively project the next CC plenum around the Xmas holiday period.
CC & PC: Paquette commented that comrades should pay stricter attention to the general confidentiality of CC and PC meetings and material. Kent commented on the necessity of CC members corresponding regularly with the PC and suggested that there be a clearer demarcation between correspondence intended for the PC-CC and that addressed to the executive secretary personally. Bourhis raised the question of area CC meetings. It was generally agreed that informal meetings of area CCers to exchange views would be desirable.
Finances: General discussion. Project establishment of budget system. Courtney raised question of travel pools for conventions and plenums. m/c to refer to PC.
Native Minorities: Discussion. Agreed that while obviously we defend the right of self-determination, this is inadequate and we need to more precisely define our position. m/c to open discussion in the CC on the native minorities question and to encourage written submissions.
Quebec: Paquette voiced opinion that subject should not be considered entirely closed by convention since there are a number of aspects not dealt with by existing documentation. Agreement that further discussion could take place at PC joint meetings with Montreal CC members.
Documentation: m/c that all adopted line documents be made available to the YS/LJS.

meeting adjourned: 5:00 p.m.

E4 1965-67 BD Sending copy of this to Regina in case you miss it in Winnipeg Write Winnipeg for Militant) they are instructed to hold 5 days if you overrun

Armentz

August 15, 1968

Trailblazers

Dear Comrades;

Now that the strike has ended I am hoping to be able to keep in touch with you and of course that you w ill keep in touch with us. It would be good if say once a week on a regualr basis if you would drop us a line of what you are doing, the responses you receive etc. We might even mimeograph excerpts and sent them out to the various branches and members at large.

I should have got this letter off to you earlier however I left town just as the strike ended for our campsite---I only came back as I am to give this Friday's forum. Will then be off again.

A big job we took on with that camp. We are building a structure which will end up 24 foot by 40 foot. A week or do ago four of us went out to Hamilton and took down peice by peice in the heat of two summer days three large shacks that had been used as offices and change-houses on a large contstryction job. This way we got about ~~$3,000~~ $1,500 worth of lumber for $500. We arranged for that to be put on a big transport truck and to be hauled down to the campsite 180 miles away. I can just see George Bryant and Lou Donnelly's faces when this load arrive/ when they were going to bed that night—and had to be unloaded. That weekend I went down with a squad of comrades and we cleared up the site, chipped down 8 large cedar trees and hauled 6 of them out of the bush on our shoulders for about 2 to 300 yards to a site where Llyod O's car could drag them to the exact location. These were the largest cedars on our lot--they turned out to be about 28 foot high. Yesterday when I left to come back to Toronto we had got so far as to have poured two of the large concrete forms and brought all the materials to the site--a big job as we have no water any closer than the river or sand ary closer than about 6 miles away.

This coming weekend will see us start to raise the structure. The site itself is by unanimous agreement very beautiful. It looks out of the bush from of top of a stone outcropping--a ledge that drops about 20 feet then slopes on down to an open field to the river bank which is flanked by fine cedars. The river even at this time of the year is 3 and 4 foot deep in many places and is about 60 feet wide.

While we have ~~from~~ as our own about 5 acres we have the run of all the land south of the river which I would estimate as being about 25 acres--varied land. By the time you get back all the major work will be done and you will be able to relax in our main hall around the fire place--we are going to build a big fire place out of native rock

The meeting with our French comrade of the JCR came off very well--it was hard to publicize it with the postal strike and it was a hot night but we got about 85 persons out and a pretty good break over radio and TV. Edmonton phoned in having heard various blurbs over national networks--alas he hasn't time to make a meeting there. Our press conference was attended by all papers and all media. The talk was good and we had many persons who I had not seen before to make up for comrades on vacations.--we charged a buck and collected another 55 . We are now luanching in coordination with the south a committee for the defence of the JCR and others . This is a big project requiring sponsors-individual and organization plus money. We are going to be the first on trial under deGaulle's new law this fall. With Sartre and others involved it will be a big project.

The Vietnam Mobilization committee held a very successful film night. Again effected by the mail strike---and this time after giving Joe the copy of an ad he submitted to proof read the Star dropped the ad on the basis of some alleged poor credit rating without contacting the committee. Got about 200 people--I had hoped double that--with Rev Kimble in the chair.

Right now the youth are carrying on a big public sales campaign of the YSF in the Toronto area--mostly in the city hall square and at Sam the Record man and the villa

we have been selling hundreds of copies--sorry I dont have the exact count--and we have have been turning up as you would expect some good contacts.

It was good to get Arnie's phone call last week with the news of the considerable success in Fort William-Port Arthur. I sent the bulk of the material he asked for that we had in stock along with a batch of the issue just off the press. I take it you will take the insert out of the other issue and put it in this--and distribute the others. I sent the parcel in Arnie's name as I was in a big rush and didn't have time to check out on the name we had agreed.

Expecting to receive anyday now copies of the minutes of your branch meetings. so I can participate in some of your discussions . Arnie told me that we have a good team in you all--very important. My only complaints --and he no doubt passed it on to you--is that the only persons we hear from are the males on this project. What are you women doing--holding off until you can speak to us only when things are going swimmingly--like when you are going to mail US some money.

Hope you have got the Volks manual so we can learn something about our van. Really we should have got one or two of you to have taken a basic auto course before pulling out. Of coure we all hope that the last repair job sees us through to the coast--and back. Even then we will have take that van off the road--probably it would be useful down at the camp or for the print shop in the Toronto area. Very diffiuclt to know what to do in the face of the big breakdowns we have been having. But then the determination of the exact point when quantity turns into qaulity has always b een the most difficult to ascertain in relation to all matters. At Schreiber the question is further confused--you are miles from nowhere--and of course as you go West prices increase--addded to that is the problem that none of you really know how to buy a second hand vehicle--and we may turn out to have a later model but one with less expectancy than the one we have.

That's the way it is--if you have money --you can save money. The poor always pay more in the long run under capitalism . But if there is another Depression Diefenbaker is a bigger Communist and we can talk to him.

I gather from a few words I had with Arnie that you have managed to work the summer semester univerity field in the Lakehead. Very good as there is no overlap with the fall students. I hope where we manage to do this that we will remember to try our hand in a general public meeting where we can hope to get young workers, NDPers on the way back. I would suppose that many areas do not have summer University semesters.

How is your studying coming along ? The classes here are going very well--- I sent you the line-up of two in the parcel to Winnipeg via Greyhound bus. And now I have sent you a copy of the last six Militants---they all piled in this morning. They have been sent to you via the post --airmail—Arnie Mintz-- general delivery Winnipeg.

Next note I will try to inform you of what is doing across the movement. The mail is n now beginning to come in at last.

warmest regards to you all from all

comradely greetings

Ross

Sent { 1 — Gen. Del. Winnipeg — Arnie Mintz
2 — Godey Militant Journal Winnipeg — Arnie Mintz

Received ? — how about sending us Sid's how are you fixed for addresses ?
— send us all Ont — You have the Prairies but will need BC what you get to Edmonton

E4 1965-67 RD

August 24 1968

William Rodney
Associate Professor of History
Royal Roads, Military College,
Victoria, B.C.

Dear Sir;

I am enclosing for your information a copy of The Vanguard which contains a review of your book, Soldiers of the International that I wrote.

Limitations of space and the rush to publish it at the same time as a memorial to Maurice Spector prevented me from giving the space that your book deserves and the more serious and rounded appreciation that it deserves. If time permits I intend to write a more rounded appreciation for the leading US Marxist theoretical journal International Socialist Review.

I must say that it was a genuine pleasure to read your book. Off and on over the years I have been working on bits and parts of the same theme and so I can fully appreciate the tsemdous work that you have put in. When Spector was visiting Toronto back in 1962 he told me that you had had lengthy discussions with him —he had forgotten your name but the information he gave me firmly identifies you. I had fully intended to trace you but the pressure of other work prevented it.

Not only did I have the pleasure of knowing Spector but also MacDonald, Max Armstrong whom I see quite regularly and Malcolm Bruce who I got to know very well until his death last year. Kavanaugh I also knew but only through mail. As you will note the paper that I edit carries the name of Spector's and MacDonald's paper. From time to time we have published in our pages material relavant to your theme.

Were you aware that the Toronto Public Library(Reference) has in its possession copies of the first papers that you refer to? Recently I turned over to them the entire run of Spector and MacDonald's paper up until the war and then the paper as it appeared during the war. They also have the paper (the Ukrainian) that Bosovitch published following his expulsion from the Farmer Labor Temple and his association with MacDonald. The tradition established by these early papers has I feel continued on in the pages of The Vanguard, Socialist Action, Labour Challenge and Workers Vanguard, almost unbroken.

Should you come into the Toronto area I would be most happy to meet you. I would particularly interested to know if you have any intention of carrying your work forwaard . Theodore Draper I understand is planning to bring the story of the US CP down to 1945—and Shannon plans to carry it forward. I have an extensive file of the Canadian Tribune along with other material including an excellent study of how the left met the challenge of World War II which I would be pleased to make available to you. anticipating your early reply

sincerely

August 24, 1968

University of Toronto Press
Toronto 5, Ontario, Canada

Promotional Department

Dear Sirs:

I would like to thank you for the review copy of William Rodney's book Soldiers of the International

I am enclosing two copies of the review that I wrote of it for your information.

I would appreciate receiving a copy of Gad Horowitz's book Canadian Labour in Politics that you suggested I might be interested in. I most certainly am. Could you also spare a copy of A Protest Movement Becalmed by Zakuta.

If it is convenient I would appreciate your sending your latest catalogue there may be other titles that we would be interested in reviewing.

respectfully

Rose Dowson

August 24, 1968
1 Cumberland Street
Toronto

Dear Friend:

The encampment that we are constructing on the Salmon River is well underway.

The site, at the mid-point between Toronto and Ottawa, not far off the mid-point between Toronto and Montreal and only about 40 miles from the U.S.-Canada border crossing at IvyLea(Kingston), has been a very busy one over the last three and four weeks.

The main structure(24ft by 40ft) perched on a rock ridge overlooking the lush river valley is now taking shape. All the forms have been poured, the beams laid and the floor downed. The walls are now being erected and we are moving out of our temporary canvas encampment to make way for the baseball diamond. The next big step is the construction and raising of the roof. The committee in charge, struck off by the PC, has been functioning extremely well and has had strong support from the personel of the Toronto LSA-YS and friends.

Having become more familiar with the area we can say that it meets all of our expectations. The countryside varies from rich rolling farm land to areas of jagged rock outcroppings. We are well off the beaten path but not far from the main transport arteries and adequate shopping facilities. The river varies up to four feet deep in mid-August and we understand rises considerably in the spring when trout fishing is said to be good. The temperature is excellent for swimming.

We had hoped to have the camp in somekind of functioning order for the Labor Day weekend but we will not be able . We anticipate winterizing portions of the building as we have learned that there is good skiing in the area--with ski-lifts and all.

There is no telephone or hydro in the camp yet and there is a scarcity of drinking water as we have no well yet. Persons going to the site must provide their own bedding and wear suitable clothing which includes long sleeved shirts, pants and preferably boots.

Anyone wishing to go to the camp must phone Toronto--either 922-6665, or 921-1637. Colonial Coach lines goes through Deseronto on Highway 2 about 8 miles due south of the camp. The bus leaving Toronto at 7;45 a.m. arrives in Deseronto at 11;40 a.m. leaving Toronto at 11:45 a.m. arrives in Deseronto 4:26 p.m. etc etc.

By Spring the camp will be adequately outfitted so that vacation plans can be laid
We will be choosing a name for the camp shortly. At this time it is known by our neighbours to be Ross Dowson and Friends' from Don Mills cottage--on the old Sexsmith farm at Kingsford. Across the river from the encampment our very good friend Jimmy Howell has a farm house.

SPEECH ON SPECTOR & "SOLDIERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL"

(Transcribed from R.D. speech notes, August, 1968)

Soldiers of the International (the CPC 1919-1929), 1968,
by William Rodney, U. of Toronto Press, Toronto

The occasion of this talk is the recent publication of a book entitled "Soldiers of the International" by an associate professor of history at Royal Road Military College in Victoria BC, and the death of a man in New York on August 1st at the age of 70.

This man was a Canadian who has not participated in a direct sense in the Canadian political life for thirty years, who withdrew from the life which he made his most notable contribution, and abandoned his beliefs for which alone he is notable. A man who is unknown to the present generation, but whose role in the history of the Canadian revolutionary socialist movement is imperishable: Maurice Spector.

The dual aspect of this forum is quite logical: the book is a study of the Communist Party of Canada 1919 to 1929, and Spector is the leading actor in this drama. Insofar as the theme of the book is of importance, so too is our commemoration of Maurice Spector of importance.

Just a month ago the conventions of the League for Socialist Action/Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière and the Young Socialists/Ligue des Jeunes Socialistes were held. Where does this movement, the Canadian revolutionary socialist movement of today, come from? "Dowson's boys" – called Trotskyists, referring to the leader of the October Revolution, socialist theoretician, famous for the theory of permanent revolution, founder of the Fourth International. Who were it's leaders and what is it's record?

Some seek the new, but no particular attributes, particularly when you realize that there is an extensive history of struggle such as we are involved in, in Canada and across the globe. Our theory is commencing with Marx and the historic events which have tested all his ideas. Where do we come from – what are our roots? And where are we going? At best the NDP, as significant as it is, can only be a stage in the struggle of the Canadian workers. As for the CP today, there is no movement more discredited.

We are for a socialist revolution in this country. We are trying to build an instrument capable of leading it, the sooner the better. We are not the first in Canada to have this view.

Pioneer communists held this view, including Spector; we're harking back to the pioneer.

Spector's struggle lasted from 1929 to 1936 – 7 years – to uphold Leninism, with "Mac" (Jack MacDonald), in the period of the Left Opposition and the Workers Party. Spector's important contribution not only opened the international struggle but laid the foundations of the League for Socialist Action. Spector, even in his abandonment of Bolshevism didn't join the renegades. He was threatened with deportation, and Canada refused him admission. He was threatened with deportation to the Soviet Union but the American Civil Liberties Union prevented it.

Spector attended the 6th World Congress of the Communist International as a delegate of the Communist Party of Canada. James P. Cannon of the (U.S.) Socialist Workers Party (was in attendance as well). He smuggled out Trotsky's "Criticism of the Draft Program," was expelled from the CPC and became the first of the Trotskyist cadres in Canada.

The CI *(Communist International, or Comintern – ed.)* subsequently rebuffed the Canadian leadership for it's "expression of support for Leon Trotsky." Spector continued as chairman, editor and chief reporter (for the CPC journal). He was the first Trotskyist in early 1928, soon making contact with Cannon, Abern and Schachtman (central leaders of the SWP).

The November 1933 Vanguard (reports:) "It is necessary to build a new party and a new International," as it's position as "Left Opposition" was abandoned. The June 15, 1934 Vanguard (published an article) "For the Fourth International."

Bossovitch, who was the Ukrainian leader and national organizer of the UFLT and founder of the CPC, was expelled by the end of 1931 or 1932.

Author Rodney perpetuates the myth of MacDonald's "Lovestoneism" – as espousing the concept of "American exceptionalism." Rodney sees the CI as the fatal connection for the young CPC. He judges the CPC doomed when it sought and secured Russian help. Rodney identifies Bolshevism with Stalinism.

(1) but it was the Russian influence that revived hope after the debacle of 1914-1918 and the betrayal or inadequacy of all other influences. Cannon asks (referring to Draper's history of the USCP) – those who rejected the Russian influence – where did they go? What of the members of the SLP (De Leon's Socialist Labor Party), the SP of C (the Socialist Party of Canada, or the) CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) – where did they go?

(2) it was the Russian influence that brought about the unity of various forces on the Left.

(3) it was this influence that helped put out the first paper, The Communist under Spector's leadership

(4) it was instrumental in overcoming those who wanted to remain underground (including Bakunin?)

(5) the Russian influence established an open paper, Workers Guard (Scott's advice was not always accepted).

By 1925 William Moriarty, in the midst of the anti-Trotsky intrigue in the CPC asked the party for a directive. Spector openly confirmed his identity with Leon Trotsky, following which the party sent it's reproof to the Comintern (see page 95 of "Soldiers of the International").

"The cable, dated April 8, 1925, ran:

'The Executive Committee is not convinced on the basis of evidence obtained, that the Comintern is actually menaced and confronted with a system constituting Trotskyism. Notwithstanding Trotsky's mistakes prior to 1917 and during the course of the revolution, we are unconvinced that the implications of the 'permanent revolution' theory attributed to him are actually entertained by Trotsky and that he contemplates revision of Leninism. We are of the opinion that the prestige of the Comintern has not been enhanced here by the bitterness of the anti-Trotsky attack. No request from leading elements or party membership for discussion in the Party press.' ''

This book is important, a big stride in providing much of the true picture of our origins. The fact that subsequently the CI deteriorated and imposed false policies, manipulated the Leadership, expelling Spector, and maneuvered to expel MacDonald, is only part of the picture. Of this revolutionary period we can say that the book "Soldiers of the International," subtitled "a History of the CPC 1919-1929" deals with the great pioneer period. It deals with a period practically unknown even by interested radicals, and what they know is almost totally false. It deals with the period when the CP was an honest party, with the days when it commanded respect of the best workers in Canada -- particularly the youth -- before it's credit, it's integrity, ran out.

How does this book stack up? Other histories – Tim Buck's "30 years, 1922-1952" is not a serious study, but an apologia by the man who more than any other person destroyed the CPC. This book (by Rodney) is the first serious study – scholarly, with interviews, unique sources; it tells the main story in an essentially accurate way, although – despite – the efforts of the author, who has no feel for the subject, no sympathy or understanding for the actors, and doesn't in any way share their ideals. He attributed the failure of the CP to its Marxist ideas.

It is like dead history, as if at 1929 with the Stalinization of the CPC, the struggle stopped, as if the characters in the drama ceased to exist. Rodney correctly sees the demise of he PC as a revolutionary force with the

expulsion of MacDonald in November 1930, two years after Spector.

But contrary to his report (pages 167 and 170): “After his break with the CPC, MacDonald and Spector joined forces in attempting to form an opposition Communist Party more in keeping with their views. The enterprise failed for lack of support, and ended when Spector left to settle in New York in 1936. MacDonald, though he remained a dedicated Marxist, never again resumed political activity. He died in Toronto on November 28, 1941.’’

The movement continued

The struggle to build the revolutionary socialist party didn't end – we are here, as big as life, working hard and growing. In fact, in 1929 we entered a new phase. Spector, the primary founder of the CP, inspired by the Russian Revolution, who read Leon Trotsky's dispatches in the Mail & Empire, and who at 19 years old attended a meeting of the SDP (Social Democratic Party) and ILP (Independent Labor Party), where he met Florence Custance and Marx Armstrong and with them organized the Plebs League (subsequently the Ontario Labor College), and in 1920 made contact with the United CP of America.

He came into conflict with the rival Workers Educational Club, under the leadership of Jack MacDonald. He was part of the ferment which saw the rapid development of the Ukrainian Social-Democratic Party, and the Canadian Finnish Organization. But it was the leadership of Custance, Bell, MacDonald, Buck, Buhay and Spector (whom the CI contacted), that lead to the foundation of the CP of Canada at a conference in Guelph on May 23, 1921.)

Remarkable was the youth of the Central Committee: Buck was 30 years old, Becky Buhay 26, Custance 40, MacDonald 33 and Spector 23. On February 17, 1922 the Workers Party was launched, with it's National Chairman MacDonald, Vice-Chairman Max Armstrong, Editor Kavanagh, with assistants Spector and Peel.

Spector’s international outlook

Spector’s international outlook was dominant, see pp 71-72: in 1923 “ while news of an expected revolution in Germany caused some speculation within the Canadian communists’ upper echelons, the majority of the CEC *(executive committee)* were too engrossed in their own problems to give the German situation much attention. Maurice Spector, editor of The Worker, alone became increasingly absorbed in the possibilities of revolution in Germany, and the prospect of a further extension of communist rule, this time in an advanced, industrialized country. When the German uprising in October failed, Spector, disappointed, went to Moscow in January 1924 for consultation with the Comintern. Spector summarized and analyzed for the CPC executive the underlying causes of the German communists’ failure to spark a full-scale

uprising. His report was a surprisingly accurate and succinct appraisal of the prevailing views and of the causes underlying the October fiasco. Spector anticipated the identical thesis put forward by Trotsky in his Introduction to "Lessons of October'' Unknowingly, Spector had become one of the Western Hemisphere's first Trotskyites.''

The fate of the Canadian section lay in the international arena – MacDonald didn't understand this. The Canadian problem couldn't be solved outside the international question.

(notes end)

CONFIDENTIAL - FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Dear Comrades:

The enlarged Political Committee meeting held in Toronto over the last weekend, (Sept. 7-8), the first since our convention, was informed by one of its members that the previous evening Allan Engler told him in a personal conversation that he would not be in attendance and that he was resigning from the Canadian Section of the Fourth International. Early the next evening Jean Rands handed over a short note to the Executive Secretary informing us of her resignation from the LSA and the YS/LJS (see copy attached).

These resignations came as a surprise not only to all CC members and alternates in attendance (from Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa) but to the Toronto membership, informed the next day at the opening of their annual conference. There had been no hint of such an action in recent months. There had been no expressed disagreements that would have suggested any such action. We understand that the Vancouver comrades with whom they worked for years were also left completely in the dark. These facts, together with Engler's taking his month's pay in advance only days before, cause us to characterize these acts as flagrant desertion of, a fleeing from, the struggle to build the revolutionary socialist vanguard party of which, up until the last moment they both claimed to be leaders - if not the best leaders.

The article in the latest issue of the Vanguard that Jean Rands states "convinced" her "that the YS is being by-passed" only came off the press 36 hours earlier and could not have been the subject of discussion at any level of the movement other than that of the author and the Editor.

As for the PC's censure alluded to in the Rands note, it did not arise out of any attempt to frustrate efforts to discuss the implementation of YS campus policy. It arose out of events at the YS/LJS convention where a document on the organizational question was withdrawn by its author, who also publicly dissociated herself from it, an the private suggestion of the LSA/LSO executive secretary on the grounds that it carried a line which had been specifically rejected by the section convention only a week earlier. This however did not deter Rands from fighting for its endorsement. The motion of censure was specifically aimed at halting Rands as a leading member of the LSA/LSO from carrying a line in the YS/LJS contrary to the formally adopted position of the LSA/LSO. No comrades other than CC members wwould be aware of this censure prior to reading the Rands note. The whole matter was left on the CC plane as the latter did not seek to bring Rands up to order before the whole movement but only to affirm that LSA/LSO members (including leading members) cannot violate section policy in the YS/LJS or any other organization.

Allan Engler's defection Brings to an abrupt close an all-out effort to integrate him into the central leadership of the LSA/LSO. This effort took on a qualitative character at last year's plenum. For some time Engler had been expressing disagreements awer the workings of the League. The disagreements as we understood them were generally organizational -- there was not enoughginformation being circulated, not enough participation of leading comrades outside the center in the decisions of the movement. At that plenum it was revealed that Engler in several conversations with two leading comrades in Vancouver had declared that he was thinking of leaving the movement to build some other type of organization which of course would be compebitive and in opposition to the vanguard party that we are bending all owr efforts to build. His claim that these statements were not his considered opinion was

accepted by the leadership. Not only that, it was decided to make a real effort to bring Engler into the central leadership of the movement -- to bring him into the center and give him the key position of organizational secretary which would allow him not just to collaborate but to lead in overcoming the shortcomings of the center.

At a later stage when we moved to implement the abbve decismon, Engler, who was unprepared to go on staff as organizer of the Vancouver branch, laid down as a condition of his coming to the center that he go on staff in the center. While it was felt that we were not really in a oosition to expand in this way it was agreed to do so in order to further accomodate him.

Engler arrived in Toronto to participate in the central leadership in the capacity of organizational secretary only a matter of months before the convention. As the leading cadre prepared the basic documents for the convention it was surprised to find Engler in disagreement to varying degrees on practically every question. This of course sharply posed the question of whether it would be possible to integrate him into this leadership at all should its positions be reaffirmed by the convention.

The convention itself saw a sharp confontation all down the line and right to the very end, with the adoption of the main positions of the outgoing leadership and the specific rejection of the positions advanced and defended by Engler and Rands.

The post of organization secretary is a key one in a Bolshevik party requiring the utmost confidence in that person by the membership. But in a further attempt to assimilate him into the leadership, despite the sweeping differences he expressed with this leadership, he was affirmed in this post on a motion by comrade Dowson by the plenum immediately following the convention.

It would appear now that comrade Engler's direction has been away from and out of our movement for some time now and that all the efforts, the kid gloves handling, the concessions and compromises, the infringements of normal Bolshevik practices by the central leadership have been in vain.

Engler has given the movement little inkling of his direction. Rands' letter, however, suggests that she and perhaps Engler are moving into the student arena in some new ventures unencumbered by membership in the Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard.

We of course will proceed undeterred in our work to build the revolutionary vanguard party essential to establish a socialist Canada in a socialist world.

Fraternally,

Ross Dowson.

September 10, 1968.

Sept 25/68

To all Branches and Members at Large.

Dear Comrades:

While the defection of Engler and Rands from our ranks suprised the entire movement, reactions varied. In most areas it was accepted, regretfully of course, but as part of the processx of building the Revolutionary Socialist Vanguard. The first reaction in other areas was one of incredulousness and a feeling that possibly the center, if not the movement itself, in someway, somehow contributed to their desertion - - all the more in the light of earlier differences expressed by Engler and the absence of any kind of statement from him, and a desire not to link the Rands statement to Engler.

The leading cadre of the movement immediately closed ranks in firm loyalty to the league but there was nonetheless considerable uneasiness in various parts. This problem has now by-and-large been solved, both by discussions with myself as executive secretary, and by subsequent personal correspondence that Engler has sent to the Vancouver branch organizer. This correspondence clearly defines Engler-Rands' relations to our movement. They are conscious opponents, enemies of our movement. They are out to do what they can to discredit its ideas and to wreck it. They will of course fail miserably all down the line.

See attached letter from Engler. The half-truths and lies around which he builds his case we will ignore. Note also the following paragraph from a letter of four days later to the Vancouver organizer!

"Even with the disagreements we have we could have accepted staying in the LSA if we felt that the main forces of the Canadian revolution would still come out of the LSA. We however, feel that the LSA as a cross country organization is finished. Undoubtedly the great majority of its members across the country are good revolutionaries but an organization is not simply the sum total of the membership. If the members of the LSA are going to in the long run continue to play a part in the revolutionary process they will have to be taken out"

During a discussion in the Vancouver YS annual conference in which I had been invited to participate and during which many of the feelings of uneasiness were expressed, one of the youbh leaders made a clear and forthright statement, a categorical denial that the ideas that he had shared with them at the recent convention in anyway lead one to follow their course -- quite the contrary. At that meeting there was a report by the Vancouver campus coordinator which showed me that the differences in this area which are supposedly revealed clearly through the CUS conference (Sept 9 Vanguard), and which Rands utilizes to justify her defection, in reality do not have any substance.

The following evening the Vancouver LSA invited members of the YS to participate with them in a discussion of the question. Following some very sharp and bitter statements against the center which I pointed out Engler himself does not make, a motion was presented to the meeting. This statement (attached) was adopted by a vote of 21 for, none against. The number of abstentions it is clear to me, flows not from non-support of the motion itself but from the confusion that developed in the course of discussion as to the interpretation that some comrades gave it.

The following night I gave a report of recent development in the movement which put the various grievances in their proper perspective -- that we are continuing to grow, to increase our influence both absolutely and relatively, and are widening our effective cadre, in fact becoming a truly pan-Canadian movement.

(over)

A fruitful, free-wheeling discussion was held with the Edmonton comrades Since then we are in receipt of a report from our Trailblazers on their experiences with certain Prairie radicals whom Engler has rapidly contacted in order to poison against us.

It is now clear that Rands and Engler have not just broken with the LSA, as the organizational expression of Trotskyism in Canada, but that they have broken with Trotskyism itself. They are now in the process of attempting to build an opposition force to our movement, some kind of broad movement limited to the student melieu, composed of politically diverse tendencies which of course could not function under democratic centralism.

This is entirely contrary to our aim. They failed to impose it on our movement. They have departed. And we go forward united in the struggle to build the Trotskyist vanguard party essential to win Canada to socialism.

Fraternally,

Ross Dowson,
for the Political Committee.

Costa Rica

November 4, 1968

Dear Art; (Grey?)

I am enclosing a copy of the latest Vanguard. As you will note the biggest thing for the revolution going right now here is the Quebec student struggle. It exploded and despite our smallness of forces and the weakness of our French speaking cadre in the secondary school area we moved right in. Put out a special issue of the youth paper which we had started just a month or two earlier--Jeune Garde and circulated it very widely. Mike Mill played a leading role in the struggle in the U of M. We were the only organzied force and small as we are the only ones consciously pushing the thing forward around the demands for autogestion--student faculty control. I am enclosing an apprec to Montreal iation that Mike made for the education of the movement. I went down and we have now decided to contest the Minister of Education in the riding of Bagot--thus we actually, physically, demonstrate the need to take it all forward onto the political plane. We have also decided to take one of the more able comrades on full time for at least six months. We anticipate on the basis of first results(kids from three different schools have come to us and we have set up socialist clubs on their schools). And to cap it off we have decided to put out a really posh issue of Jeune Garde, a twelve pager, printed and possibly some colour. As I see it right now we would make it a grand report of the struggle and an appreciation--and we would tie the struggle with that in Mexico and France and of course raise the whole level by giving good coverage of the election campaign.

This is the biggest opportunity we have had from an electoral activity at the culmination of a big struggle, in the province of Quebec where the political level is highest in all Canada. Mike is an excellent candidate. struggle wise Unfortunately our French comrades are not yet able enough--but Mike speaks excellent Franch and has a very good grasp of our views. The riding is a rural one but only 40 miles from Montreal. I will be going down to helpthem put out the tabloid--probably this weekend. John will go down the final two weeks probably to replace Art who will go into the riding.

The October 26bmoblizations were very successful right across Canada. I never saw such a mobilization of police here in Toronto. They made it a point of highest principle that we not be allowed down Yonge. In fact they were prepard for an insurrectionary struggle. They told storekeepers on Yonge to lock their doors. It so happened they had several hundreds of police from across Ontario training in riot control etc at the Exhibition Park--they brought them in. They had several squads of police, mounted police, at different points. They had three (at least) large buses at the ready so they could maneuver their forces quickly. Some one said they had two specially constructed riot cars behind the College and University station. There were plain clothesmen everywhere-- After the whole thing was over and some of the group at the US consulate moved up university to the front of the parliament buildings they were met by a squad of over 100 podice in formation who drove them away. Quite an eye-opener for a whole new layer of young people who came on the demo. So about 30 persons were arrested . The Maoist Canadians For the National Liberation Front have moved in with their people who were arrested and laid down the law that everyone has to be defended by a front they have set up with their line or else. Rather than have two defence organizations appealing for help -- both of which end up getting no one --we have decided to have the Vietnam Mo bilization Committee raise funds for anyone who applies and hire a lawyer for consulatative pruposes for anyone wishing it

Next Sunday we are opening up in Hamilton with a bang. We had a couple or comrades in there who together with our one native managed to get the October 26 action moving there in Hamilton. One of the results was a fantastic editorial in the Hamilton Spectator--half of the column and heading it off--attacking Trotsky. We have five comrades there now and we will soon be a big factor- first in the campus, anti-war movement and radical circles---and then into the bog steel mills.

We will have two national tours underway in the month--Jaquie Henderson for the youth and Joe Young for the Vietnam movement. This will be directed in large part not only to knit together the many connections we made and or strengthened with this summers Trailblazers but to build up the conference of University socialists our youth will be calling this Christmas weekend

This week a Mexican student will be touring the campuses. What reperccussins has the revolt had in Costa Rica ? Has the news got through ? I am looking forward to meeting this student to see how we fared. I would imagine many more of us are jailed. A big dissapointment-the coverage of Granma. The last issue said nothing about the student struggle---nothing about the Olympics other than the prize winning--nothing about the very dramatic and effective demonstration by the Black athletes. Of course it did have some material about Czechoslevakia a real Stalinist type article.

The Czech invasion is having real represuccsions throughout the CP's and interestingly enough in the decrepity CP of Canada and that of the US. The Tribune staff and the youth leadership have opposed the recent turn of the top brass to all out support of the Soviet bureaucracy. The rumours are that Ryerson has gone back to teaching and Ray Murphy has quit. The last issue of the Tribune showed that the staff of Tribune is inoperative. It looks like the clerk opened up the mail and threw into the paper various articles that out of town correspondents sent in, then filled out the rest with articles from the US paper. Even bigger-- the West Coast US CP paper has come out strong against the leadership's support of the Soviet bureaucracy and have even sent one of their correspondents-a member of the US CP leadership--to Czechoslovakia--he is making eyewitness reports that ridicule the whole line that there was a danger of capitalist degeneration. Alas these elements are generally so soiled that there seems little possibility of their going anywhere

The London Vietnam demo was a big success--probably you have read lots about the conduct of the police. But of course there never was any real threat of riots --that was the big build up to scare off the crowd. Ernie Tate sent in a pile of clippings today. They estimate that there was almost 100,000. The VSC part of the demo came off exactly as planned--only about 4,000 broke ranks in the various little side episodes promoted by anarchists, Maoists etc.

I was up to your town of Coldwater last month. Held a bit of a class with two very excellent contacts of Mary and Jim Donnelly's. We are planning to hold a class about once a month. In fact we are going to try to arrange forums on Toronto that can be suitably used elsewhere and for smaller audiences. And we will take them on tour....Hamilton, Guelph, Kitchener-Waterloo and Coldwater- It looks like we may be setting up a branch in Richmond Hill. Through the very good work of Bea and George we have revitalized an old contact who moved up there and we have enough for a branch of five ,possibly six.

I suppose you read about the barring of a Dr Rodney from Jamaica which sparked the violent explosion amongst students and then amongst the masses in Kingston. Well we had him at our forum a couple of weeks ago. Got an excellent audience - made many contacts with Jamaicans here in Toronto

- Returns are coming in on the radio while-I pick up this letter between various interupptions. Looks like LBJ brought Humphries in warmest regards Ross

November 16, 1968
1 Cumberland Street
Toronto

P. Violino
736 University E
Windsor 14, Ontario

Dear Comrade;

Very happy to receive your letter today.

I am enclosing the lateatcopies of three of our publications The rates are noted in the pages.

Unfortunately we do not have any active contacts in the city that you are living in. Regretabbly it is one of the few larger working class areas where we have nothing going. We have a local of our youth organization in the city of London--half way to Toronto - and that is the closest

However our southern co-thinkers have a very active branch in Detroit, right across the river from where you are living. Their public headquarters is located at 3737 Woodward and it is called the Debs Hall. I would suggest you go over there to see them and ask for Evelyn Sell or Frank and Sarah Lovell. I would speak to them, tell them who you are, before moving around their branch as immigration authorities keep informed through the FBI and RCMP

I would be pleased to hear what you are doing in Windsor. You dont happen to be associated with one of the universities there perhaps. If you were we might be able to work Windsor into one of our campus tours ---there are two underway right now.

Looking forward to hearing from you--and of course should you be able to come into Toronto meeting you personally. We would be able to accomodate you

fraternally

Ross Dowson

November 18, 1968

Niagara Falls

Dear John (-?)

Good to get your note and list of subscribers this morning. We have sent everyone the latest issue with a short covering noteof apology for the delay, due to an administrative mix-up

Sorry we did not have a chance for a talk right after the October 26 mobilization. But I suppose you were with people who wanted to get back to Niagara. The Hamilton meeting came off well. You must have noted the short report in the Vanguard. The Hamilton comrades tell me the daily press coverage was gnarally good--emphasizing the points that I certainly wanted emphaisized--that we want to collaborate with union militants, student radicals and NDP rank and fil rs to socialized the NDP and the unions.

I do not know if you have had an opportunity to speak to Dave. He is in constant close contact with Hamilton and things are really moving there. At this stage it is mostly on the campus--the Young Socialists had their first campus club meeting. We have turned up an really excellent young fellow who is carrying the ball. We have als had a Mexican student leader and Jacquie there. The NDP is opening up--Charlie L ran for executive member at the weekend convention of the NDP and got a good vote. John phoned in last night to tell me that Bill Walsh has agreed to give an educational report on the history of the Hamilton labor movement shortly.

My short trip there for the forum is the first of what we fully intend will be a circuit operation of tours. Hamilton is planning that Gary Porter speak next on the Quebec student struggle and our election campaign in Bagot.

As soon as you are able we would like to carry or extend this circuit into Niagara Falls. We are just waiting to move with you as soon as you can give us the signal.

Dave of course is working with the Hamilton comrades but I think that we can switch him back into your area as soon as you give us the call.

Is there not some friend who could receive a call for you--who would give you a message that we would like you to call us. I would appreciate such a phone number.

fraternally

'Ross

ON THE TENDENCY FORMATION STATEMENT

A group of comrades in the Vancouver branch have submitted the attached statement as a declaration of their formation of a tendency. The document is unsigned but we understand that comrades L.S., K.C., D.C., S.C., D., K.G. and possibly three or four others have signed it. This is to inform the League of the formation of this tendency and at the same time to make a few comments.

It is only four months since the convention of the LSA/LSO. That convention was the most thoroughly documented convention in our history. Through that convention the movement clearly defined its views on a series of major questions -- not only by adopting certain key resolutions, but so that there could be no possible confusion as to the meaning of these resolutions, by the formal rejection of certain other submissions and amendments which it was felt might leave open some areas of doubt.

One of the key documents adopted by that convention was the Political Resolution. This document dealt with what this tendency statement calls "the general direction of the whole movement", the "movement's direction" and "future perspectives for mass radicalization in Canada" etc.

This document was adopted unanimously by the convention. We would also note that the political positions of Rands and Engler (insofar as they did/not lead them to quit our movement and declare themselves to be opponents of it) -- and which this tendency states it "may be in agreement with", were, after full and democratic discussion and vote rejected by the convention.

A serious movement, not to speak of a Bolshevik democratic centralist movement, can look only with some misgivings to a tendency which would appear to be seeking to reopen the discussion decided upon so recently and so clearly by a convention.

We know of no new developments on the Canadian and international arena that have taken place since the convention that throw its decisions into question. Nor do we know of any experiences gained in the process of implementing the convention line that throw into question its validity.

Considerable emphasis in the statement is given to what "may well occur" and what "may well take place" -- and if so and so takes place, what it would mean, and what our correct role would be.

While we are not in any way averse to speculationas to the challenges that may confront the movement on the road ahead we have no reason whatsoever to feel that our movement will not prove able to deal with future developments. The leadership of the League was elected only four months ago and was fully representative of all sections and tendencies existing at the time. We see no basis to question either its capacity or the capacity of the movement as a whole to respond to future developments.

Dreams, or speculation, to be valuable to the movement, must have some connection with the reality around us. And it is in this respect, when the tendency statement moves to the concrete -- into the three areas which it states need serious reexamining -- that we find the greatest confusion if not obvious errors.

The document <u>The NDP Hardens</u>, adopted by our previous convention, gave greater weight, projected greater possibilities for socialism to pro-NDP tendencies in the trade union movement than in the constituency associations. But why won't the radicalization be "reflected" into the NDP through the constituency associations? And why should work there be "abandoned", abandoned in favor of work through the trade unions and direct propagation of Trotskyist ideas?

As for the Socialist Caucus in Ontario which we have sustained with great effort over the past year. At the recent ONDP convention it really blossomed out, attracting leading activists across the province and won the convantion to many of its positions --notably on Vietnam and housing, and established its legitimacy.

Its "erection", life itself has proved, as we foresaw it would, was by no means artificial and cannot at all be said to be of little political value.

In place of a strategy -- our NDP orientation for instance -- the tendency document urges us to decide on various developments on their "individual merits". Tenants' unions present us with no new problem. In fact in Toronto we are in the leadership of the most spectacular struggle that tenants have so far waged.

The problem is a highly political one -- and that fact, not a "view" either mechanical or otherwise, leads it inevitably in the direction of the NDP.

As for COPE. This is class collaborationist politics! Popular Frontism -- that is its "independent political significance". And we not only refuse to identify ourselves with such formations but struggle vigorously against them. COPE is a positively retrograde development, made possible by the treachery of the NDP leadership and its failure to raise the banner of independent labor political action on the Vancouver municipal arena.

As for Point 3 -- our movement certainly does have a mass perspective. It aims to coalesce the various elements of spontaneous opposition to the war in Vietnam into a mass movement. Hence the slogans End Canadian Complicity and Withdraw U.S. Troops Now. These slogans are not abstract but profouddly anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist. That they have been adopted by all the major effective anti-war forces across Canada demonstrates that they are not artificial.

We have strongly upheld the nonexclusionist character of the movement and have attempted in no way to block the participation of anyone or any demands. We have fought to make our slogans, which are completely revolutionary, the prevalent ones. For these slogans to prevail, it is necessary that those who advocate them carry them.

Other slogans such as Defend the Colonial Revolution are neither more explicit nor more "uncompromising" -- on the contrary they are more vague, more abstract and less capable of mobilizing a mass movement.

The tendency statement is studded with such terms as -- "aggressive extension of open mass work by the LSA", "direct propagation of Trotskyist ideas", "openly Trotskyist" etc. We do not quite grasp what this is all about. The LSA is a proscribed movement in the NDP -- but is it losing itself in this reformist movement? The Vanguard is now published on a twice-monthly basis and circulated widely in the trade union movement and the NDP. We publish all the major declarations of the world movement. YSF is pushed on a wide scale and we understand the comrades are considering putting it out as a tabloid and with greater periodicity. La Lutte Ouvriere has been expanded since the convention and we are now publishing Jeune Garde which we are also pushing out on a wider scale. We are carrying LSA forums even where we have very limited forces. We are publishing LSA/LSO convention documents in separate pamphlet form in both languages. Right now we are immersed in the biggest election campaign in our history which we are contesting under our own name. Yes, we do not grasp what this is all about.

We see no basis at this time for reopening a discussion through the movement on the strategy of our mass work, the movement's direction, etc. Quite the contrary. We have just come through an extensive period of discussion and it is now time to act on the conclusions of that discussion -- it is necessary for every comrade to fully implement the policies of the movement and for the appropriate leading bodies of the movement to see that this is done and to the limit of our capacities.

It is our hope that this tendency will dissolve on the basis of a clarification of our views that can take place in the course of the work of the Vancouver branch -- or make a more serious effort to expound its views so that the movement as a whole can come to grips with them.

by Ross Dowson,
for the Political Committee.

November 20, 1968.

December 3, 1968

St Catherines

Dear Dave;

On the way to work on the bus t is morning I took time out to read the November issue of 199 News.

This is one of the worst union papers that I have ever read.

All this crying about members not participating in the activities of the union--if what this papers says is what unions should be doing then I wouldn't understand anyone really boethering to participate--unless he was trying to get on the gravy train.

There is no element of class struggle in the paper, conflict with the boss -- defence of workers interests,let alone development of them. From page to page it is strictly establishment. The main function of unionism from this paper is to serve as a collection agency for worthy causes, the traditional causes, bosses causes.

Layettes for Eskimoes, poppies for vets, buses for hard of hearing and so on.

Then along with that---

the picture of that Democratic party(boss party) candidate"Labour's Staunch friend--Humphorey

recreation column that plays up stags for men--imagine such anti-feminist crap in a union paper

and who the hell is Charles R Cook aldorman that we should endorse him no explanation at all--probably some kind of fink--if he is NDP why doesn't it say so.

Just sit back and think about all the real problems confronting the working class movement in this country. high prices, housing, anti-labor laws, 41% living below the poverty level, the Picton strike, the NDP convention etc etc. I think you should consider writing something for the paper--trying in some way to make it not such a terrible waste of union money, trying to build a bit of a left wing in that union. I see Gorson L Lambert is on the editorial board----it is for laughs

fraternally

Ross

Look over Hughes local paper when next you come in — get some ideas!

Dec 19, 1968
1 Cumberland Street
Toronto 5, Ont.

Keith MacDonald
7142 Spruce Street
Halifax, N.S.

Dear Friend;

Our American co-thinkers of the Socialist Workers Party have forwarded the note you sent them on October 10. The struggle that they are involved in is a world wide one and we have been in the closest contact with them for some years now. We sometimes exchange speakers with them--Mrs Hedda Garza has appeared at one of our Toronto forums.

We are organized as the League for Socialist Action-La Ligue Socialiste Ouvriere and publish an English language paper The Workers Vanguard and a French paper La Lutte Ouvriere. We are associated with a very vigorous youth movement- the Young Socialists-Ligue des Jeunes Socialistes, who publish an English language magazine The Young Socialist Forum and Jeune Garde. I am enclosing sample copies. We hope that you will subscribe.

Better still. Do you happen to know a young man by name of Chris Thurrot in Halifax. He is a very active spokesman for socialism on the campus there and a leading socialist in the New Democratic Party youth. I had the pleasure of meeting him when the League was preparing to contest the newly appointed Tory leader Robert Stanfield in the by-election there last year. Under our pressure at the last moment the NDP entered a candidate (unfortunately an ineffectual one) but Chris arranged a couple of meetings which I addressed.

I am looking forward to see Chris over the next weekend as I gather he and his friend Kim Cameron at 1600 Walnut are coming up to the Socialist Students conference being held here in Toronto over Dec 27-29. I am sure that both of them would be pleased to meet you and to talk over what can be done to promote the socialist cause in the Halifax area.

Do not hesitate to write if I can be of any help to you.

fraternally

Ross Dowson

1 Cumberland Street
Toronto 5, Ont.
December 19, 1968

Dave Bain
246A Sheppard Ave West
Willowdale, Ontario

Dear Friend;

Our American co-thinkers of the Socialist Workers Party have forwarded us the note that you sent them on November 11th. I gather you must have heard one or the other of their presidential candidates--Paul Boutelle or Fred Halstead. over radioor TV.

The struggle against capitalist wars and injustice which they are heading up in the U.S. is an international one and we have been collaborating with them in it for some years now. We are organized as the League for Socialist Action/ La Ligue Socialiste Ouvriere and have the strong support of a dynamic youth movement called the Young Socialists/Ligue des Jeunes Socialistes. We publish a twice monthly tabloid newspaper The Workers Vanguard and our youth publish a magazine called Young Socialist Forum. I am enclosing sample copies of each. I hope that you will subscribe.

Better still. I see you are living just on the outskirts of Toronto. It so happens while we have branches or locals in the major Canadian centers, both our central offices are in Toronto. We also have a very fine bookstore where you can obtai all the more important labor and socialist literature. Why not come in to see us. Our store is open at 10;30 every morning but Sunday and it is at 824 Yonge Street, only one block north of Bloor at Yonge street. Our youth headquarters is at 32 Cecil Street, just one block south of College off Spadina.

For some reason I have the impression that you are a student. Do you know about the Socialist Students' Conference that is taking place next week--Dec 27-29 at Hart House. You will meet a lot of fine young people fighting for a socialist Canada an who would very much like your help.

Anticipating meeting you first opportunity.

fraternally

Ross Dowson

Re Camp POUNDMAKER

December 30, 1968
1 Cumberland St .
Toronto

Dear Friend;

Another 19 acres of land has been acquired immediately abutting the 7 or 8 acres of land which our lodge has been built on. We obtained this land in order to fill out the area available to the camp and to set up at the same time a modest recreation-vacation community.

This 19 acres is now up for sale. In order to complete the deal now underway we are required to raise a certain sum of money immediately. If you are interested in a part of this land would you contact us immediately. The general terms of sale are as follows;

— A —

-cost per acre $350. Minimum lot two acres, maximum 4 acres
-the lots will be surveyed and the owner will be given clear legal title
-the owners will be guaranteed reasonable access to the land occupied by the camp and all the facilities of the camp.
-the owners will be guaranteed the right to tap into the electric power brought into the lodge but will be responsible for any extension to their own property and the cost of power they use
-the owners will be guaranteed a source of potable water on the camp property

— B—

-the owners will guarantee a committee composed of themselves and camp representatives first option to purchase back any lot should the owner choose to sell
- owners will guarantee the camp community reasonable access to their lot. Community use of the land area for baseball diamond, roads, developed swimming facilities etc will be determined by the committee.

Several comrades have already indicated their desire to purchase a lot at Camp Poundmaker. They are intending to take a loan out with their credit union.

If you are interested contact the above address at once. We are setting a deadline of January 15 to make certain decisions of a preliminary character in respect to the above.

fraternally

R. Dowson

Undated- found in 1968

1 Cumberland Street
Toronto, Canada

Jack Alan Robbins
Fordham University

Dear Sir;

In a matter of days you should be receiving the Morley Callaghan books that you asked me to pick up for you. We received them a while back but has misplaced your address. Sorry.

There is a book that you will find of considerable interest. It is called Soldiers of the International--a history of the Communist Party of Canada 1919-20 written by William Rodney and published by the University of Toronto Press--$~~7.50~~ $7.50

It is not a political history---but it is a very accurate factual history . To a large degree it would appear to be based on interviews with Maurice Spector. I think you were going to contact him with regards to your project. And possibly you have since found that he died-late July or early August I think. I had several discussion with Spector and what he told me is affirmed in this book.

sincerely

Ross Dowson